

WYCOMBE WANDERERS 1, WITNEY TOWN 2

WYCOMBE Wanderers could have made sure of becoming the first Shaw and Kilburn Floodlit League Champions on Tuesday evening when Witney Town, who had lost to the Wanderers by a massive 6-0 earlier in the season, were Loakes Park visitors.

In the event, Witney fielded a much stronger side than in the previous meeting and deserved to win, thereby leaving Wycombe all to do on the last night in the last match of the competition against Aylesbury United. The Blues had to win to snatch the title from the early pace-setters Banbury United.

In the first quarter of an hour, Wycombe were well to top, and as early as the first minute, Derek Harris fired a vicious shot straight at Keith Baker. A couple of minutes later Roger Day sent the 'keeper full-stretch to tip round his post for the first of many Blues' corners.

But after settling into their stride, the visitors began to move forward, with Mike McFarlane proving to be an attacking defender, who wasted no time in bringing the best out of Chris Smith, the Wanderers' stand-in goalkeeper.

After 17 minutes, the visitors could well have gone ahead. John Bailey, who was shortly to prove such a menace to the Wanderers' defence, outpaced reserve centre-back Steve Barnes only to be tackled from behind by Barnes inside the box. The expected penalty was not given and it was another eight minutes of solid Witney pressure before the visitors opened their account.

NO CHANCE

Allanson sent Roy Clarke away down the left, and the midfielder's perfect cross was met beautifully by Bailey's head, to give Smith no chance from close in.

Although the goal spurred Wanderers to greater effort, all departments were in trouble against a Witney side that was well drilled and looked as if it had played together all season.

Although the front runners of Harris, Horseman and Bullis worked hard, Shuker's

men were rock solid and never looked like allowing the Wanderers' strikers through.

SLIDE-RULE

On 35 minutes, Witney's midfield mastery paid off. Allanson beat Kennedy in the centre-circle to put a slide-rule ball through to Bailey. The big No. 7 beat Alan Phillips for speed and got a well taken goal with a low drive from 18 yards under Smith's body.

Wanderers flattered to deceive immediately after half-time. Kennedy hit a powerful free-kick from the edge of the Witney penalty area through the defensive wall, the ball smacking against an upright with Baker well beaten. The deflection screwed across the goalmouth to be met by the fast-running McKenzie a couple of yards out, and he made no mistake with a first-time shot.

Highlight of the half was the appearance of Steve Hardwick — the former Altrincham, Northern Premier League player — who came on for Barnes immediately after half-time. For 45 minutes, Hardwick put not a foot wrong, and his masterful distribution to both flanks at least gave his front runners every chance.

Micky Holifield replaced Bullis on 70 minutes, but the attack continued to lack bite, and an equaliser seldom looked likely. Only a powerful Kennedy effort from way out, and a twenty-yarder from Harris, which grazed the post, gave Baker any cause for concern.

WYCOMBE: C. Smith, P. Birdseye, R. Davies, S. Barnes (S. Hardwick 45 mins), A. Phillips, R. Day, G. McKenzie, H. Kennedy, D. Harris, D. Bullis (M. Holifield 70 mins), A. Horseman.